What is claimed is:

1. A patch comprising a breathable backing coated with a polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel, the hydrogel comprising one or more local anesthetics or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. The patch of claim 1, wherein the patch is sterile.

3. The patch of claim 1, wherein the breathable backing comprises a polyester/polyether copolymer film.

4. The patch of claim 1, wherein the hydrogel further comprises a preservative.

5. The patch of claim 1, wherein the local anesthetic comprises a sodium-channel blocker, an antidepressant, an NMDA receptor antagonist, or an opioid, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a mixture thereof.

6. The patch of claim 5, wherein the sodium-channel blocker is lidocaine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

7. The patch of claim 5, wherein the antidepressant is a tricyclic antidepressant or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

8. The patch of claim 5, wherein the antidepressant is amitriptyline or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

9. The patch of claim 5, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is a non-competitive NMDA-receptor antagonist or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

10. The patch of claim 5, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is ketamine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

11. The patch of claim 5, wherein the opioid is morphine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

12. A package containing a sterile patch, the patch comprising a breathable backing coated with a polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel, the hydrogel comprising one or more local anesthetics or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

13. The package of claim 12, wherein the breathable backing comprises a polyester/polyether copolymer film.

14. The package of claim 12, wherein the hydrogel further comprises a preservative.

15. The package of claim 12, wherein the local anesthetic comprises a sodium-channel blocker, an antidepressant, an NMDA receptor antagonist, or an opioid, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a mixture thereof.

16. The package of claim 15, wherein the sodium-channel blocker is lidocaine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

17. The package of claim 15, wherein the antidepressant is a tricyclic antidepressant or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

18. The package of claim 15, wherein the antidepressant is amitriptyline or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

19. The package of claim 15, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is a non-competitive NMDA-receptor antagonist or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

20. The package of claim 15, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is ketamine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

21. The package of claim 15, wherein the opioid is morphine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

22. A method of inducing local anesthesia in a mammal comprising topically applying a patch to the mammal, the patch comprising a breathable backing coated with a polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel, the hydrogel comprising one or more local anesthetics or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the patch is sterile.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the breathable backing comprises a polyester/polyether copolymer film.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the hydrogel further comprises a preservative.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the local anesthetic comprises a sodium-channel blocker, an antidepressant, an NMDA receptor antagonist, or an opioid, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a mixture thereof.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the sodium-channel blocker is lidocaine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein the antidepressant is a tricyclic antidepressant or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

29. The method of claim 26, wherein the antidepressant is amitriptyline or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

30. The method of claim 26, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is a non-competitive NMDA-receptor antagonist or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

31. The method of claim 26, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is ketamine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

32. The method of claim 26, wherein the opioid is morphine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

33. A method of treating the pain associated with a non-intact skin indication in a mammal comprising topically applying a sterile patch to the non-intact skin indication, the patch comprising a breathable backing coated with a polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel, the hydrogel comprising one or more local anesthetics or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the non-intact skin indication is a wound or burn.

35. The method of claim 33, wherein the breathable backing comprises a polyester/polyether copolymer film.

36. The method of claim 33, wherein the hydrogel further comprises a preservative.

37. The method of claim 33, wherein the local anesthetic comprises a sodium-channel blocker, an antidepressant, an NMDA receptor antagonist, or an opioid, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a mixture thereof.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the sodium-channel blocker is lidocaine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein the antidepressant is a tricyclic antidepressant or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein the antidepressant is amitriptyline or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

41. The method of claim 37, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is a non-competitive NMDA-receptor antagonist or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

42. The method of claim 37, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is ketamine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

43. The method of claim 37, wherein the opioid is morphine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

44. A polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel comprising one or more local anesthetics or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

45. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 44 in sterile form.

46. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 44, further comprising a preservative.

47. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 44, wherein the local anesthetic comprises a sodium-channel blocker, an antidepressant, an NMDA receptor antagonist, or an opioid, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a mixture thereof.

48. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 47, wherein the sodium-channel blocker is lidocaine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

49. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 47, wherein the antidepressant is a tricyclic antidepressant or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

50. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 47, wherein the antidepressant is amitriptyline or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

51. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 47, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is a non-competitive NMDA-receptor antagonist or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

52. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 47, wherein the NMDA-receptor antagonist is ketamine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

53. The polyvinylpyrrolidone-based hydrogel of claim 47, wherein the opioid is morphine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.